

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4444

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 1253

FOR ARA/CAR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JM, US

SUBJECT: GOJ CONCERN FOR AFRTS REBROADCAST OF CBS "SPECTRUM"
COMMENTARY

REF: DORRANCE/THYDEN MARCH 16 TELECON

1. SEVERAL HOURS AFTER REFERENCED TELCON DURING CONVERSATION ON OTHER SUBJECTS WITH FONMIN PERMANENT SECRETARY FRANK FRANCIS, LATTER TOLD DCM ON "PERSONAL BASIS" THAT AMBASSADOR RATTRAY IN WASHINGTON WAS SEEKING APPOINTMENT AT HIGH LEVEL IN DEPT. OF STATE TO EXPRESS "CONCERN, DISMAY AND SORROW" RE AFRTS' RECENT REBROADCAST OF THE CBS PROGRAM "SPECTRUM" (LATTER OFFERED A CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON JAMAICAN BY NATIONAL REVIEW COLUMNIST EVANS). FRANCIS SAID MAIN POINT RATTRAY WOULD MAKE WAS THAT BROADCAST OF COMMENTARY BY A "U.S. GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND CONTROLLED STATION WAS IN CONFLICT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIPS EMERGING AS A CONSEQUENCE OF FONMIN PATTERSON'S MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE". DCM TOLD FRANCIS THAT SINCE HE OFFERED THE FOREGOING ON A PERSONAL BASIS HE (DCM) COULD OFFER FOLLOWING ON AN EQUALLY PERSONAL BASIS.

A. THE U.S. MEDIA, CONTRARY TO THE OPINION OF SOME HERE, ARE COMPLETELY FREE. THE CBS PROGRAM
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"SPECTRUM" IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THAT FREEDOM; IT REGULARLY OFFERS EXTREME POINTS OF VIEW OFTEN IN CONFLICT WITH USG POLICY. USG COULD NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTENT OF PROGRAM IN QUESTION-- WHICH ADMITTEDLY WAS BIT INCREDIBLE.

B. AFRTS NETWORK IS AUTONOMOUS. ITS PROGRAMMING IS INTENDED TO ASSURE THAT AMERICAN SERVICEMEN OVER-

SEAS RECEIVE A CROSS SECTION OF AMERICAN MEDIA VIEWS
AND PROGRAMS.

C. THIS IS ACHIEVED BY CONTRACTING FOR A WIDE
RANGE OF AMERICAN NETWORK PROGRAMS, E.G. "SPECTRUM".

D. MANY AMERICANS PROBABLY WOULD FIND OFFENSIVE
ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE U.S. DOMESTIC NEWS MEDIA, OR
U.S. SERVICEMEN'S ACCESS TO THAT MEDIA THROUGH AFRTS,
BE CENSORED AS TO POLITICAL CONTENT.

E. IF CAUSE FOR PROTEST EXISTS, PERHAPS IT LIES
HERE IN THAT GOJ-GUIDED MEDIA, E.G. JBC RADIO AND
TV, AND THE GOVERNMENT PARTY'S VARIOUS ORGANS,
REGULARLY FLAY THE U.S. WITH SCURRILOUS ALLEGATIONS.
BASELESS AND UNFRIENDLY ALLEGATIONS BY PARTY AND
QUASI-OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN ARE CERTAINLY NOT
IN THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIPS CITED BY
PERSEC.

2. FRANCIS REPLIED THAT "ON A PERSONAL BASIS" HE
UNDERSTOOD AND SYMPATHIZED WITH DCM'S "PERSONAL
REMARKS". HE OFFERED THE HOPE THAT WASHINGTON
OFFICIALS WOULD BE EQUALLY CANDID IN DISCUSSING THE
MATTER WITH "ANY JAMAICAN OFFICIAL."

3. COMMENT: FRANCIS CLEARLY IS EMBARRASSED BY
AMBASSADOR RATTRAY'S FORTHCOMING DEMARCHE IN WASHINGTON.
WE CAN SAFELY ASSUME THAT HE ADVISED HIS MINISTER AGAINST
SENDING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THAT DEMARCHE AND IS LOOKING
FORWARD TO BEING ABLE TO SAY "I TOLD YOU SO".

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4. WE SUGGEST THAT RATTRAY'S PROTEST BE REJECTED
AND HE BE REMINDED NOT ONLY OF THE FREEDOM OF THE U.S.
MEDIA, INCLUDING AFRTS, BUT ALSO OF THE STREAM OF
INVECTIVE DIRECTED AGAINST THE U.S. VIA GOJ AND PNP-
CONTROLLED AND GUIDED MEDIA.
GERARD

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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